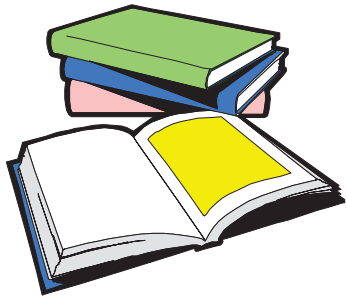




Books in Review

WHY GOD GAVE US A BOOK

by Gene Edward Veith

P&R Publishing, 44 pages, \$4.99

Very few Christians would dispute the fact that God communicates with believers. The disagreement among Christians, however, arises over how He communicates.

As Gene Edward Veith points out, "Many people expect God to inspire them directly. They cultivate a God within who gives them the right emotions, puts ideas into their heads, and communicates to them in a sort of nonverbal ESP" (pg. 5). Moreover, Veith points out that "many Christians are uneasy about the Reformation insistence on *sola Scriptura*, 'Scripture alone,' the notion that the Word of God is sufficient for us, the only revelation we actually need" (pg. 6). It is this latter premise which he successfully argues for in *Why God Gave Us a Book*.

The "how" of God speaking is a critical issue because, as Veith tells us, without a commitment to a sufficient Scripture, "many try to supplement the Bible with human reason, scientific scholarship, sociological research, or the findings of modern psychology. Still others try to supplement the Bible with mystical experiences, inner convictions, and personal revelations" (ibid.). We live in a time when far too many believers are "listening" for God in all the wrong ways and by doing so miss the reality of God revealing Himself to His people.

The author speaks to the power of God's Word as he offers a testimonial of how reading the Bible brought him from a liberal theology to biblical faith.

Veith addresses other methods that exploit the Word of God: "People are trying to use the Bible as the ultimate self-help book. Some are trying to abstract principles from its teachings that will supposedly give us happier lives. We are told that if we follow the management principles of Jesus, our businesses will prosper, or that if we follow biblical principles about how we handle money, eat, or conduct our family lives we will be wealthy and healthy, eliminate our problems, and live happily ever after" (pg. 18).

In the discussion of the authority of the Bible, Veith describes a variety of assaults from academia, including higher criticism and The Jesus Seminar. Here, we are told, "What higher criticism represents is the larger phenomenon of placing some human authority over the authority of God" (pg. 27). And Veith cautions, "One does not have to be a liberal to practice liberal theology either. Churchmen who look to culture rather than to God's Word to determine what they should teach, how they should live, and how they should worship are liberal theologians, even though the culture they are imitating may be conservative" (pg. 28). This is a sobering warning for Christians to consider against the onslaught of contextual theologians and Church leaders dotting the landscape. The authority section also contains brief overviews on the inerrancy of Scripture and its proper interpretation.

In the next section, Veith describes why the Bible is sufficient. Here, those who add to Scripture by various means are spotlighted: "Roman Catholics supplement the Bible with the teaching magisterium of the Church" (pg. 35). And lest one think Protestants are free of blame, we are told: "Among Protestants, many evangelicals, including the whole charismatic tradition, believe that the Holy Spirit inspires individuals with supernatural powers and knowledge. They consider themselves to be guided by intuitions, visions, dreams, and inner voices that they take to be from the Holy Spirit himself" (ibid.). It all tells us how far we have drifted from a belief in the sufficiency of Scripture which is the root system of the Church.

In his conclusion, Veith explains, "We live in a time of spiritual starvation. People own Bibles and even claim to believe in them, but Bible reading and Bible literacy are at all-time lows. Many churches have stopped, or radically cut back, the reading of the Scriptures in their services to make more time for pop music. Pastors are preaching from their own creative imaginations rather than preaching God's Word. To be sure, quite a few churches are growing, attracting numbers through the application of sociological principles and marketing devices" (pg. 41). This is why we need to be reminded with the information and challenges of this small, but insightful book.

Why God Gave Us a Book can be easily read and comprehended in a single session and will help you develop a strong apologetic on the sufficiency of Scripture.

—MKG

Editor's Note: The publications featured in PFO's *Books in Review* section are available from **Personal Freedom Outreach** (P.O. Box 26062, Saint Louis, Missouri 63136). Please add \$2.50 to the price listed for shipping and handling. Due to occasional price changes by the publishers, the retail amounts listed are subject to change without notice. These publications are also available to those who help to financially support the work of PFO. Please see our funds appeal flyer for details.